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ON THE YAMUD AND GOKLAN TRIBES OF TURKOMANIA.

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Read before the Society, 13th March 1844.

In offering an account of some particular branches of the Turkoman race, it will be proper at first to cast a rapid glance over what constitutes Turkomania in general, and name the principal tribes that form the great Turkoman family.

The extensive plains between Bokhara on the east, the Alburs chain to the south, the Caspian Sea to the west, and the Khanat of Khiva to the north, form the natural, although insufficiently defined boundaries, in which the wandering Turkomans roam with their droves of horses and camels, and their flocks of sheep, spreading their tents along the banks of the mountain streams which flow into the Caspian, or are lost in the sands of the desert ; and, in default of rivers, digging wells in the dry steppes, to slake their own thirst and supply their cattle, often only with brackish and salt water.

The Turkomans consist of the following great divisions :—The Salú, reckoned the most noble tribe, occupy Serekhs, to the east of Mesched in Khorasan, on the road to Bokhara. The Saruk or Sarik, inhabit Merv at Merú, to the north of Mesched, in a straight line to Khiva. The Tekke, the most numerous tribe, are scattered along the northern skirts of the Alburs chain, called Attók, to the north-west of Mesched, and subdivided into Tekke Akhál and Tekke Tejen.

The Goklans live to the west of the latter, and the Yamúds to the west of the Goklans, up to the eastern shores of the Caspian.

Before I enter into a more minute description of the Yamúd and Goklan tribes of *Turkomania*, it may be as well to point out the geographical limits to their wanderings. To the west is the Caspian Sea, to the south, the great chain of Alburs and the province of Asterabad ; to the east, spurs of the same chain, separating the Goklans and Yamúds from another considerable Turkoman tribe, the Tékéh ; and lastly, to the north, the desert extending to Khivah.

This country, the ancient Hyrcania, and very probably the

Vehrkâna, the eighth abode of bliss mentioned in the Zend texts, and known to the Arab writers by the name of *Jurjan*, is watered by two great rivers, the Gúrgan and the Attrek, both of which flow from east to west, and fall into the Caspian Sea. The country occupied by the Turkomans bears the reputation of being healthy. The plain at the foot of the mountains being more open and lighter, than the strip of land which, in Ghilân, Mazanderân, and Asterabad, runs between the hills and the shores of the Caspian, there is much less dampness in the air and unwholesome exhalations in summer, which, combined with other causes, produces in those provinces intermittent fever and bilious complaints. The lower courses only of the Gúrgan and the Attrek partake of the same unwholesome climate; there the country is low, and from the overflowing of the rivers in spring, marshes and pools are formed, which, in summer, corrupt the air, breed swarms of gnats, and render the place disagreeable and unwholesome. The heats in summer are tempered by the cool breezes from the sea, which waft freely across the open plains; the dews at night are likewise copious and refreshing; the winter, nearer to the mountains, is not severe; further to the north, in the desert, it is more sensible; there, likewise, the snow lies longer on the ground. Autumn and winter are, however, more especially the seasons for rain, although Turkomania is not deprived of it at other periods of the year, as is the case in the high table-lands of central Persia. Rains are most frequent in the neighbourhood of the hills and near the Caspian Sea.

The Turkomans, then, who live nearest the Caspian Sea, are the Yamúds, having the Goklans to the east of their encampments. As great animosity reigns between them, there is a strip of neutral land which separates the two rival tribes, having the solitary minaret of *Jurjan* as a sign-post to mark the boundary.

The Yamúds are divided into four principal tribes :—

1. Sheref, subdivided into 6 shafts.
2. Chûni, subdivided into 10 shafts.
3. Beyram-Shalî, 5 shafts.
4. Kujúk-Tatár, 8 shafts.

These tribes are said to be the descendants of four brothers,

whose father Yamúd, is looked upon as the founder of their race.

All these tribes encamp on the borders of the Gúrgan and Attrek rivers; extending to the NW., they roam with their herds in summer in the hilly country of Balkhan, and many families are settled in the Khanát of Khiva. The average number of the Yamúds amounts probably to 40,000 or 50,000 families. The principal distinction among the Yamúds is their division into *Chomúr* and *Chorvá*; it is founded on the difference of their mode of occupation, and the relative distance of their encampments in respect to the Persian territory of *Asterabad*.

The Yamúd Chomúr occupy both the banks of the Gúrgan river, and even stretch as far south as the river Karasú, where they have their corn-fields, their rice plantations, and vegetable gardens. They are less wild than their neighbours to the north, the *Chorvá*; give themselves up to agriculture, and are on much better terms with the Persians than the latter. They often visit the bazars of *Asterabad*, bringing into the market for sale the produce of their industry—such as felt, and woven carpets, wheat (which is much superior to that of *Asterabad*), barley, butter, sheep, horses, &c., and receive in exchange the coarse manufactures of that province, consisting of different sorts of *alijeh* or silk stuffs from *Anezane* and other districts, *kadek* or cotton from the looms of *Shahrúd*, in Khorasan, of *Burujird*, (near Hamadan), and of *Isfahan*. This friendly commercial intercourse with their neighbours does not prevent them from committing plunder whenever a favourable opportunity offers; but the principle charge lodged against them by the Persians, is, that they give refuge and screen from pursuit the foraging parties of the Attrek Yamúds, in their incursions into the territory of *Asterabad*.

The Yamúd Chorvá encamp to the north of the former, on the banks of the river Attrek. They are the same Yamúds as the Chomúr, composed of the same tribes; the only difference is the mode of life they lead, which is essentially pastoral; they have more numerous flocks of sheep, herds of camels, and droves of horses, than their agricultural neighbours of the Gúrgan river, and, living nearer the desert, and

further from Asterabad, they are perfectly independent of the Persian sway.

It frequently happens that the Chomúr and the Chorva change their avocations. When a Chomúr realises a small fortune, he lays out his stock in the purchase of sheep, camels, &c., quits the banks of the Gúrgan, approaches the desert, and becomes a Chorva, in order to be beyond the reach of the Asterabad authorities. On the other hand, when a Chorva is deprived, through misfortune, of his flocks, he turns agriculturist, and becomes a Chomúr. According to the principles laid down in political economy, the agriculturist stands a degree higher in the scale of society than the shepherd who tends his flocks: it is the reverse on the plains of Turkomania. We must observe, however, that although the Chorva lead essentially a pastoral life, they still possess some fields which they cultivate between the rivers of *Attrek* and *Gúrgan*, but the soil is much inferior to that on the southern banks of the latter river.

It would be foreign to the object of the Society were I to dwell at any great length on the various remains we meet on the plains of the Yamúds and Goklan Turkomans, and which denote that this country must have been formerly densely populated, and have attained a certain degree of civilization, to which at present it can lay no claim. I shall, therefore, limit my observations to a summary sketch of what may appear most interesting. The first object deserving of notice is the great wall which runs from E. to W., and situated between the Gúrgan and Attrek rivers. By whom was it erected? In D'Herbelot we find some obscure accounts about a certain wall to the east of the Caspian, which he surmises may extend to the Chinese walls, and compares with the *Saddi Tuj-i-Majuj* of the Arab writers—the Gog and Magog of Scripture. Oriental historians speak of a wall which Núshirvan raised against the encroachments of northern barbarians, or only repaired an old one, attributed to Alexander Dúlkarnein; but I shall leave the hypothetical and historical part concerning this wall (although the subject well deserves a closer investigation), and attend to the description of it in its present state.

The wall commences at the mountain of *Pushti Kémer*, about fifteen miles below the source of the *Gúrگان* river, along which it is carried nearly in a parallel line with the stream, on the right bank, till it reaches the shores of the Caspian, and the continuation of it is said to be seen under water for some distance. The whole length of the wall may be ninety miles, or thereabouts. I must observe, however, that it does not form an uninterrupted rampart, but consists of mounds of various heights—in some parts from eight to ten or twelve feet high, in others level with the ground, and imperceptible. The wall, externally, is covered with earth, and overgrown with grass and brambles; and it is only from the intersections, and the bricks strewed about, one can judge that it was built of large square bricks.

At fixed intervals there are square redoubts, each face of the redoubt measuring 150 paces; on some of them the Turkomans have their burying-ground.

This wall goes by the name of *Kizil-Allán*, (*Kizil* meaning gold, and *Allan* probably borrowed from the once powerful nation of that name, who were settled for a time near the Caspian, and who, during the rush of the Asiatic hordes into Western Europe, penetrated, with the Suevi and the Vandals, into Spain.) *Klaproth* is of opinion, that the *Ossets*, spread in the *Kabarda* and the valleys of the *Caucasus*, are a remnant of the *Allans*. *Deguignes* says nearly the same thing.

Beyond the *Kizil-Allán* is another wall, running parallel to it, but much lower, and in many places imperceptible. The intervening ground forms a road at present; but I suspect that formerly it must have been a canal or ditch, serving two purposes—that of strengthening the line of defence, and, in time of peace, supplying water to the fields beyond the *Gúrگان*. What bears me out in this conjecture is the following fact:—As the *Gúrگان*, with its tributaries, flows between very high banks, water could not be procured for irrigating the fields; the cultivators of the land were obliged, therefore, by means of canals, to bring the water from a distance, where its level was higher than the fields which required irrigation. I met with several of such canals, brought from the mountains, and extending to the *Gúrگان*, with remains of aqueducts,

by means of which the water was carried over the river, and then ran along another channel, till the junction of the latter with the *Kizil-Allán* wall, which in those parts is cut across, to allow the passage for the water.

The tower called Gúmbet-i-Kabús has been described by other travellers; it stands amid the ruins of the once populous town of *Jurjan*, celebrated for its learned men, and capital of the whole province which bore its name, now covered with high grass and reeds—a receptacle for leopards and other beasts of prey.

Of the town of Bibi-Shirvàn nothing more is seen beyond a number of green mounds, although the Turkomans assured me that some deep subterraneous passages have been discovered there.

Both Bibi-Shirvàn and *Jurjan* are said to have been destroyed by an earthquake. I likewise learned, when it was too late to retrace my steps, of the existence of a great reservoir of water, somewhat in the style of the Lake Mœris, in Egypt. The natives call it *Ystákh*, and say that it is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ English miles in length, and wide in proportion, and above 30 feet in depth. In spring, the water of the torrents, flowing from the mountains, is accumulated in the lake, and is used in summer for the irrigation of the rice plantations.

Gaúr-Kaléh, Perez, Sháhrek, appear to have been towns or fortified camps. Dashtalghé or Salocil represents, in all probability, the site of the palace and pleasure-gardens which Amir-Timur had constructed for the ladies of his harem during the winter he spent at *Turjan*, which is close by.

The plains of Turkomania possess above 60 very considerable artificial mounds, such as are met in Khorassan; they certainly are of great antiquity, and may be referred to the times of the Scythians or Parthians. In one of these mounds some very curious articles, in gold, copper, and marble, have been lately discovered. A detailed description of them has been presented by me to the Society of Antiquaries.

The ruins of Ak-Kaléh, a modern town, are situated between the Kara-Sú and Gúrgan rivers. It was once the capital of the Kajars.

The Goklans ascribe their origin to two brothers, *Du-*

durgá and *Alghidagli*, from whom all their different clans proceed. They are now divided into the following tribes :—

1. Yangakh.
2. Senkrik.
3. Kerrik.
4. Boïnder.
5. Kara-Balkhan.
6. Erkegli.
7. Koïï.
8. Ay-dervish.

The number of the Goklans formerly amounted to 12,000 families, but of late years it has, from various causes, considerably decreased. The Khan of Khiva forced several thousands to settle in his dominions ; others voluntarily migrated in the same direction at the approach of a Persian army in 1836. They soon found, however, that they had exchanged their wooded, fertile, and beautiful valleys, abundantly watered by mountain streams, for a barren and sandy waste, and prepared to return to their former habitations, but were met with an obstinate resistance on the part of the Khan of Khiva, who, to prevent their escape, issued an order that the first deserter should be thrust into the mouth of a loaded mortar and blown up into the air. But such is the love of country, and the power of local associations, that the Goklans braved the sanguinary decree, and the no less dangerous flight across the desert ; and many escaped pursuit. It is on occasions like these that the excellency of the Turkoman horse can be best appreciated—the fugitives being obliged to traverse, day and night, immense tracts without water. The Goklans, on escaping from the pursuit of the Usbeks, are exposed to the attacks of the Téké Turkomans, their deadly foes, through whose territories they are under the necessity to pass before they can reach their native valleys. Hiding themselves during daytime in ravines, they continue their flight at night, often traversing from 35 to 40 miles at a brisk trot on their hardy, yet slender-limbed animals.

As a proof (if proof be yet necessary) how kind Providence is ever watchful to help the needy, I may state that, on the very verge of the desert, but still in the country of the enemy, the Goklans find a tribe of their own countrymen—the *Koï*—

settled there for a number of years by permission of the Téké Turkomans, who never molest them. Here the fugitives alight for a short time, to fetch breath, and snatch a momentary repose: the Koï procure them food, and often fresh horses, to continue their journey.

The beacon which serves to guide the Goklans across the dreary steppe, is the snowy peak of Demarend (not more than 30 or 40 miles from Teheran), and yet seen at a great distance in the desert of Khorazm.

The Turkomans follow the creed of Mohammed, and are of the Sunni persuasion, *i.e.*, they recognise the four caliphs, his immediate successors. Although not very scrupulous in following the tenets of the Koran, they still have their Mullahs or Cazi, the propounders of the law, who, at the same time, are the civil judges of the tribe. These Cazi follow their course of studies at the colleges at Khiva, but are seldom less ignorant than the rest of their countrymen, although perhaps more crafty.

Among the Turkoman tribes there are four distinct from the rest, supposed to be descended from the four first caliphs. They are equally respected by the Yamúds, the Goklans, the Tekke, the Salúrs, and the Sariks, and are not touched by those rival tribes.

The names of these four families are the following:—The Khoja, descendants of Ali; the Atta, descendants of Omar; the Shikhs, descendants of Osman; and the Makhtum-Kúli, descendants of Abúbekr.

Some of these tribes have turned to account the advantageous position they enjoy amid their countrymen: and, under the safeguard of their sacred origin, have become merchants, traversing with their caravans of camels in all the directions of the desert—carrying goods to the different hostile tribes, and receiving others in exchange, without fear of being plundered or molested by any of them.

In wishing to present here a sketch of the Turkoman character, I regret that I can find but very few redeeming qualities to palliate the evil propensities of their nature. The Turkomans are said to be brave; but I am inclined to suspect that this notion arises from the circumstances of their enemies being cowards. A Turkoman feels always reluctant to expose himself to danger; his warfare against the Persians

is seldom a manly, open war; it generally consists in sudden unexpected incursions. The Turkomans approach the Persian villages in stealth, in the dead of night, wait for the first dawn of morning, then rush on the disarmed and drowsy population, plunder what they can; after which they retreat precipitately, carrying off into their deserts the captives who have fallen into their hands. Their piratic exploits on the Caspian are likewise directed against the poor villagers of Mazanderan, who venture too near the beach, or fish in the sea. If the Yamúd finds his enemy armed with a matchlock he seldom attacks him, but speedily retreats, or hides himself in the thick forest. The Turkoman seldom makes use of fire-arms, and prefers the lance and the sabre.

The ruling passion of the Turkoman is thirst for plunder—nothing is reckoned sacred that stands in the way to the attainment of the objects of his cupidity; and when force cannot be employed, he has recourse to cunning in order to be possessed of the object he covets.

The second passion which fills his breast is revenge: it is subservient to the first, and proceeds generally from some sordid motive. The secret, and often the ostensible, cause of their bloody feuds, is founded on the prospect of plunder.

The reason why the Turkomans are more inhuman than the other barbarous wandering tribes, cannot be attributed, I believe, to any other cause, than that they are slave-dealers. Their daring forays are usually undertaken with a view to carry away captives, whom they retain in chains, until redeemed by their relations, or sell them in the bazars of Khiva, if the ransom money fails to arrive in time, or proves insufficient to satisfy their cupidity. The prisoners are sometimes retained for their own use, and sent to tend their flocks in the desert, or employed in field works. Thus they are the terror of their neighbours—the Persians of Mazanderan, Asterabad, and Khorassan, who are obliged to be always on their guard against the sudden attacks of the Turkomans.

As the Persians are of the Shia sect, and the Turkomans of the Sunni, the latter justify themselves on the ground that to seize on a Persian and sell him is lawful; others, however, are more sincere, and own that if the Persians, instead of

Shia, had been Sunni, then they themselves must have turned Shia,—as the circumstance of being of the same religion might have interfered perhaps with their present lucrative trade. These religious scruples do not prevent them, however, from capturing persons of their own religious persuasion and their own tribe, with whom they happen to be in enmity, and fixing enormous prices for their release.

If this thirst for gain renders the heart of the Turkoman callous to the suffering of his fellow-creatures, I found, on the other hand, that the feelings of sympathy are more developed among the inhabitants of Asterabad, than in other parts of Persia,—the danger apprehended from the Turkomans being the tie which unites them. Thus, if any of them falls into the hands of the enemy, subscriptions are made to release the captive, and the whole community takes a lively interest in the sad event. I beg leave to mention here an instance, of which I myself was a witness.

On riding one evening through the streets of Asterabad, I found a woman kneeling in an open mosque, clinging with both arms to the pulpit, and weeping bitterly. On inquiry, I found that intelligence had just been received of her son being kidnapped by the Turkomans. I recommended the disconsolate mother to pray with faith, and God would hear her prayer. In the meanwhile, the news spread through the town, horsemen were sent in pursuit of the robbers, but returned without having discovered any traces of them. The boy, a lad of 13, was the son of a common dyer, and had strolled out of the gate with a companion to fetch fuel from the wood close to the walls. A Turkoman, it seems, who had been prowling like a beast of prey, seized on him, while the other lad made his escape.

The night was far advanced, when a loud noise in the street close to my dwelling aroused our party. It was the lad, who had made his escape from the Turkoman, and was now led in triumph about the streets with joyful acclamations. As I had evinced some interest in the catastrophe, his father brought him to shew me that he was safe.

It appears that the Turkoman, while it was light, lay hid in the thicket; as night came on, he issued from his hiding

place, and stole near to the ramparts of the town, in order to gain the plain, dragging along with him his captive by the arm, who dared not scream for fear of being put to death. He, however, recollected that he had a knife in his right pocket, and complaining that his right arm was quite benumbed from the Turkoman's grasp, he entreated him to release it for a while and take hold of the left ; to which the robber acceded. As soon as he had found his right arm free, he thrust it into his pocket, seized the knife, and with all his force hit a blow on the hand which held his left arm. The man let go his hold from pain, and the boy dashed into the thicket. The night was dark, the town too near for the Turkoman to tarry long ; he soon gave up the search, and fled to the Gurgan river, while the boy ran to the city-gates, and knocked for admittance.

The Yamuds, as well as the Goklâns, have a very high opinion of their own race, and never grant their daughters in marriage to strangers foreign to their respective tribes, like the Rajpûts in India.

To prove how great is their susceptibility on this point, I shall state a fact which took place during the reign of the late Feth Ali-Shah.

Mirza-Naghi-Khan, of Fenderis, father to Mir-Sadúllah-Khan, the present chief of this district, fell in love with a young Turkoman girl, and demanded her in marriage from her parents. They resisted for a long time, but at last, by money and fair promises, yielded to his importunities, and their daughter became his wife. This event exasperated greatly the whole tribe against Mirza-Naghi-Khan ; but as he was a powerful and dangerous neighbour, they stifled their feelings, made peace with him, and feigned to have forgotten the affront. At the expiration of a year, the young Turkoman woman expressed a wish to visit her parents, and as the Persian Khan felt no apprehension in her going, he granted her request. But no sooner had she entered the encampment of her tribe, than the Turkomans seized on her, dragged her to the top of an artificial barrow, and there, in the presence of her parents, cut her to pieces. Foreseeing the vengeance which threatened them on the part of Mirza-Naghi-Khan, and not feeling themselves sufficiently strong to resist him, the

Turkomans broke up their tents and retired to Khiva. But if we feel shocked at the barbarous act above related, how much more shall we have to deplore the atrocious means to which the injured party had recourse in retaliation for the deed?

Mirza-Naghi-Khan made believe that he was sorry for what had happened, acknowledged himself in the wrong for not having respected their prejudices, and pledged his word that no harm should be done to them, if they would only return. The Turkomans believed him; but they were not reinstated long in their former encampments, when Mirza-Naghi-Khan seized an opportunity to fall on them unawares, and carry away about 50 women of their tribe, whom he put to death in cold blood, in order to avenge the death of his wife, and slake his thirst for vengeance. The decrees of Providence are ever just,—a few years later the chief of Fenderiss himself fell by the hands of the Turkomans.

The Turkomans observe a difference between their children from Turkoman mothers, and those from the Persian female captives whom they take as wives, and the Kazakh women whom they purchase from the Uzbeks of Khiva. The Turkomans of pure race enjoy full privileges, while the others are not allowed to contract marriages with Turkoman women of pure blood, but must choose themselves wives among the half-castes and Kazakh captives.

As there exists a great animosity between the Yamúds and Goklans they do not intermarry, although they reckon themselves of equally noble lineage. The same hatred is extended to the Tékké Turkomans, whom the Goklans and Yamúds, moreover, look upon as their inferiors, being, according to their genealogies, the descendants of a slave-woman, whilst they are the posterity of a free-woman.

All subjects are better understood when explained by comparison; faithful to this principle, I shall endeavour to delineate the physical features of the Turkomans, by likening them to, or distinguishing them from, the Mogol race, as a term of comparison, because there exists some affinity between them. The eye of the Turkoman is formed on the same principle as that of the Mogol, and appears to constitute a remarkable

feature in the Mogol race. It is the eye of the feline species, with the extremities drawn up towards the temples; but, if I am not mistaken, the pupil of the eye is not so black with the Turkoman, and the eye larger. Neither is the nose so flat, nor the lips so thick, although the high cheek-bones bear the Mogol type. The Kalmuk approaches nearest to, or is more probably identical with, the Mogol; he has the same low forehead, the head pressed down, forcing the cheek-bones to protrude forward; the same flattened nose, and thick pouting lips, with small black eyes, nearly hid from sight by his swollen face; the same jet black hair; the chest is likewise broad and muscular; and, to judge by appearance, one would think it alone endowed with power at the expense of the lower part of the figure, as the legs are short and gauky; but one is brought to form a better opinion of them, when the Kalmuk vaults on horseback, without saddle or bridles clinging fast to the sides of the animal with his thighs and, ankles, and defying the wildest horse of the steppe to throw him down. The Turkoman does not resemble the Mogol in these respects:—He has a high forehead; his hair is not so black; the chest less developed, in fact, narrow and flat like that of the Persian race; or, bringing the comparison nearer home, like the chest of his own breed of horses. Like his noble animal, the Turkoman, generally speaking, is tall, well-shaped, with large bones. He is not deficient in strength, and has muscular arms, probably from the use of the bow; but the arms of the women are perhaps still more muscular, owing to the heavy work which falls to their share.

As the Turkomans generally wear long flowing robes, I could not well examine the form of their legs. There appears, it is true, a certain curvature, by the toes being bent inward, which may proceed from their equestrian habits from childhood; but they are not so bandy-legged as the Mogols or the Kalmuks.

If I were to search for a family resemblance between the Turkomans and any other Turkish tribe which has fallen under my notice, I should be inclined to compare them to the Nogay-Tartars, in Northern Daghestan, on the Western shores of the Caspian. The Nogay, with the Krim, the Astrakhan, and

the Kazan Tartars, formed once the Golden Horde, under the sway of Mogol or Tartar Chiefs. It was in consequence of the Mogol dominion that the name of Tartar extended to them, although they reckon themselves of the same extraction as the Turks of Constantinople; and the Turkomans pretend to be of the same origin. It is affirmed, however, by those who have studied the several Turkish dialects, that there exists a material difference between the language spoken at Constantinople, and that by the Kazan Tartars, or the Turkomans, who, together with the Uzbeks and others, speak the Jagatai Turkish. The language in use among the wandering tribes of Turkish origin in Persia is different from both the former, and is reckoned a corrupted dialect. That of Constantinople is the most elegant and the best cultivated of the three.

The more intimate connection of the Astrakhan and Kazan Tartars with the Mogols can be traced in their features; with the *Nogay* it is less visible. In like manner, the Turkomans further off in the desert, and the Uzbeks of Khive, have more of the Mogol expression than the Turkomans who encamp near the Persian frontier. The frequent intercourse of the Nogay, in latter years, with the Cherkess, seems to have improved their race; and notwithstanding the enmity that exists between the Turkomans and the Persians, it is still not unlikely that their close vicinity should have produced on the former a similar effect in a lapse of several centuries. The fact we have seen, that the Turkomans marry Persian women, when they take them as prisoners. The Turkoman women are, like the men, tall, and when young, well-shaped; their faces are rounder than those of the men; the cheek-bones less prominent; the eyes black, with fine eye-brows, and many with fair complexion; the nose is rather flat; the mouth small, with a row of regular white teeth. In a word, a great number of the younger part of the community might be reckoned as fair specimens of pretty women.

I hope I may not be accused of partiality if I do not draw an equally advantageous picture of the old Turkoman matrons; for they are downright hideous, to say the least of it. Their ugliness is, however, cast in a different mould from that of the old women among the wandering tribes of Persia. The

latter have sharp-marked features, with a wild piercing eye sunk in a hollow socket ; the face of the former, on the contrary, is nearly flat, with hardly any appearance of a nose, and shrivelled all over.

What presses the nose of the Turkoman women towards the top lip, is their custom of hiding their mouths under a handkerchief, which reaches to the tip of the nose, pressing it down. The same custom prevail among all the Armenian women in the East, and is reckoned as an indispensable condition of female decency. This part of the dress is somewhat similar to the *Penom* worn by the ancient Gebber priests whenever they approached the sacred fire, for fear their breath should pollute the pure essence and symbolic manifestation of the Deity ; for, according to the doctrines of the *Zend-Avesta*, the same as in Gospel truths, it is that which cometh out of man which defiles him ; with that difference, that Zoroaster understood it in a more literal sense.

We have seen that the Yamuds are addicted both to a pastoral and an agricultural mode of life—although *more especially* to the former. Their neighbours, the Goklans, are more settled. Their tents are spread in beautiful valleys, others in the plain along the banks of the Gurgan and its tributaries. Their chief occupation is agriculture ; the land is reckoned very productive, although at present much neglected. The soil between the mountains and the Gurgan, consisting in black earth and clay, is used under wheat and barley fields,—the crop of which, in proportion to the seed, in good years, is 100 to 1. Beyond, but close to, the river Gurgan, the fields yield the sixtieth grain, and less as one advances towards the north. We might feel somewhat reluctant to admit this great disproportion between the seed and the harvest, were we not informed by Herodotus, on whose veracity we may safely rely, that the fields near Babylon produced corn in the proportion of 200 bushels to one bushel committed to the earth.

Independent of field work, the Goklans have plantations of the mulberry-tree for their silk-worms. If China be the fatherland, as it is supposed, of the silk-worm, then in travelling towards the west, this insect was probably reared in the valleys of Gurgan, before it spread and flourished in the pro-

vinces of Ghilan, of Shirvan, or even attained Asia-Minor and Brusa.*

We read in the Arab writers, that in the flourishing days of Jurjan the revenue of the province was collected in raw silk.

The Turkomans marry their children at an early age—the lads from fourteen to fifteen, and the girls from ten to twelve. But in cases of early marriages a singular custom exists among them. After the ceremony is over, the young spouse tarries only two or three days with her youthful mate, and then returns to her parents, where she remains two, and sometimes three, years. During this interval she prepares her dowry consisting in her apparels, and the necessary articles for adorning the interior of their future tent. When the two or three years are completed she is conducted to the tents of her father-in-law, and lives there with her husband during a twelve-month. At the expiration of the year, the father allows his children to have a separate household, especially if a child be born unto them. Separate tents are then allotted to the young couple, and the young man receives his share of his father's property, consisting in camels, horses, flocks of sheep, &c. But notwithstanding the separation has taken place, the father still continues to provide for their maintenance the first six months ; after which the young man becomes free from the control and guardianship of his parent, who till then had exercised an unlimited power over him—possessing the right even of life and death, without being liable to give any account of his actions to the society of which he is a member.

As hard work generally falls to the lot of the women, while the men saunter away their time, when not engaged in a foray, the Turkomans prefer young widows to young girls for their wives, as the former are more accustomed to hard labour, and more experienced in household concerns. The Turkoman widows fetch a double price in comparison to spinsters. Thus, if a girl be worth the value of five camels, a widow cannot be had under the rate of ten camels. But justice must be given to these women for their industrious habits ; they have always some work in hand, and are seldom seen idle or loitering

* See in Professor Ritter's geographical work, entitled "*Erdkunde*," an interesting historical account of the culture of the Silk-worm.

about ; and notwithstanding the fatigues of the day's labour, I generally found that whenever an enemy was prowling about the camp at night, they were always the first, like the geese of old Rome, to give the word of alarm.

The Turkomans have a notion that they cannot shew a greater degree of respect to their departed friends than by burying them the moment they give up the ghost ; and it is greatly to be feared that many an unfortunate victim is thus prematurely hurried to the grave from this mistaken notion of honouring the dead.

On the spot, in the field where the corpse is washed, the Turkomans raise a small barrow, and dig a ditch round it ; from thence the dead body is carried to the burying ground of the tribe on some elevated tepeh or artificial hillock, as there are so many on the plains of the Turkomans since times immemorial. As soon as the sad news spread abroad, all the relations and friends arrive from the different encampments to condole with and offer consolation to the family of the deceased. They bring their own tents and place them in a circle round that of the mourners ; the women then go by turns to weep with the family, especially such who have gained some reputation in the art and manner of weeping in the proper style. The men remain mostly out of doors ; and, as on all occasions when they meet, whether at joyous festivals or funeral ceremonies, riding is their great amusement, horse-races are usually resorted to. They remain, thus carousing, for weeks together, at the expense of their host, until the latter announces to his friends, that, thanks to their endeavours, he (if it be a widower) or she (if a widow) feels consoled and resigned to his or her fate. This is a signal for the party to break up their tents, and take their leave. These condoling visits become very expensive to the poor survivors, who have often not only to weep for the loss of their relative, but likewise that of being ruined into the bargain by their considerate friends. It sometimes happens that rich Turkomans, from a feeling of ostentation, retain their guests for a whole month, feeding them with rice, mutton, cheese, butter, milk, and such other produce of their flocks and herds, in which their riches chiefly consist. Among the Yamuds,

there are individuals who possess upwards of 1500 sheep, 200 camels, from 20 to 30 mares, and as many captives. The Goklans are not so rich in herds. I have mentioned that the Turkomans are fond of horse-racing. It is quite a passion with them. To a Turkoman a horse is everything. On its strength and power of endurance depends materially the success of his predatory excursions into the enemies' country ; on its fleetness—his means of escape. It is to develop these essential qualities that the Turkoman consecrates to his horse all his leisure hours. To say that he attends more to the care of his horse than to his own child, would not be saying much ; because the latter is left completely at the mercy of chance, to grow up as he can, while the favourite horse receives all the attentions, not only of its master but of the whole family. It would take us too far were we to enter into the details of training Turkoman horses ; moreover, other travellers have already given descriptions about it ; we shall only observe that the Tekke are reckoned the best horses for a long and protracted journey and forced marches ; *the Goklan and Yamud are more slender, and swifter horses.*

The Tekke are preferred even to the pure Arab blood-horse, by the Persians at the Court of the Shah, and among the great men. As the encampments of the Tekke Turkomans are among the ruins of Nissa, it is very probable that the Tekke horses belong to the same *Nissean* race of horses which Strabo, and other ancient writers, mentioned as being mostly prized by the Persians. It is equally to be supposed, that it was on the same Turkoman breed of horses that the Scythians, and, later, the Parthians, waged war against their enemies ; and the plains of Turkomania was the seat of their dominions.

When not engaged in plundering expeditions, nor exercising their horses, the wandering Turkomans lead an idle life, spending the day in sauntering from one tent to the next. They assemble in groups, and find great pleasure in talking over their deeds of prowess, and cunning manœuvres in surprising their enemies. Among other recreations, we must not omit to mention that the Turkomans are very fond of the game of chess, and are reckoned to be great proficient in it : even their enemies, the Persians themselves, who are good

chess-players, admit the superiority of the Turkomans in that respect. What renders the game more puzzling, and the calculations much more difficult, is, that their chess-board is not, like ours, divided into thirty-two light and thirty-two dark compartments for the movers, but consists all of one colour. It is nothing more than a four-cornered linen rag, with lines drawn over it in a vertical and horizontal direction to mark the sixty-four compartments. This simple chess-board, which can be wrapped up as a pocket-handkerchief and carried about in the pocket, is evidently manufactured by their women, for the transversal lines are stitched on the linen with dark worsted threads. It is recorded that, during the reign of the late Shah, a Turkoman came to Teheran, and having been admitted into the presence of the Feth-Ali-Shah, he beat all the best chess-players at the Court of his Majesty, and gained a large sum of money.